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**SYMMACHUS, *LETTERS* 1.** M.R. Salzman, M. Roberts (trans.) *The Letters of Symmachus: Book 1.* (Writings from the Greco-Roman World 30.) Pp. lxxii + 215. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2011. Paper, US\$34.95. ISBN: 978-1-58983-597-9.

Gavin Kelly

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*atritus*. Here, against Seyfarth's acceptance of Heraeus's *ignoti*, they defend the *noti* of the often nonsensical but fundamental *Vaticanus* manuscript by appeal to snake lore in Pliny, *Nat.* 8.86. They incline even more, however, to the substitution of *rotae*, which recalls an apposite snake image from Ammianus' beloved Virgil (*Aen.* 5.274). Here, as often, Seyfarth's conservative text provides ample opportunity for the authors to redeem *V*'s text, to prefer previous emendations, or to offer their own with a compelling combination of boldness and caution.

It is difficult to offer criticisms other than picayune of a work that brings a standard and eminently illuminating series closer to its ending. It is noteworthy that these scholars, who have worked so intimately with a sometimes baffling text, tend towards an ultimately positive reading of Ammianus' pessimism: meaning is salvageable amidst gloom and corruption. In their efforts to reconstruct Ammianus' lost whole the authors give comparatively little attention to the most speculative of revisionist theories like that of C. Kelly in their *After Julian* collection (op. cit., pp. 271–92), who alleges that many of the distortions and inconcinnities in the book are designed to represent a less coherent world.

Dalhousie University/University of King's College

PETER O'BRIEN  
[peter.obrien@dal.ca](mailto:peter.obrien@dal.ca)

## SYMMACHUS, *LETTERS* 1

SALZMAN (M.R.), ROBERTS (M.) (trans.) *The Letters of Symmachus: Book 1*. (Writings from the Greco-Roman World 30.) Pp. lxxii + 215. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2011. Paper, US \$34.95. ISBN: 978-1-58983-597-9.

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Symmachus must be a strong contender for the most important Latin author of Antiquity to lack an English translation; the first complete translation in any modern language, J.-P. Callu's Budé edition, was only completed in 2009. Since Symmachus' prose is often challenging and allusive, it is a huge advance to have an English version of any of his *œuvre* (fragments of eight speeches, nine complete books and one fragmentary book of letters, and the *Relationes* he wrote to the emperors as prefect of Rome in 384–5; only the *Relationes* have been previously published in English, by R.H. Barrow [1973]). S.'s new work, with R. as co-translator, is therefore very welcome. The translation comes with S.'s lengthy introduction, introductory sections for each correspondent and letter, and detailed annotation covering dating, literary references, social nuance and prosopography: this material is frequently acute and always sedulously referenced but, as we shall see, not always accurate enough. The commentary is more detailed than Callu's, but less so than that of the Italian commentaries on Symmachus' letters (which do not yet include Book 1). The letters and the problems arising are made accessible to Latinless readers (it is perhaps unhelpful that the *Relationes* are called '*State Papers*' and Horace's *Epistles* '*Letters*'). However, a Latin text of each letter, based on Seeck and Callu, is included: this will be a convenience for scholarly readers. Though there is no apparatus, the more important variants are discussed in the notes.

The first book of letters is the most polished and interesting of Symmachus' *œuvre*. Its 107 letters, mostly short, are organised by addressee. These are (1) the author's father, Avianus Symmachus, prefect of Rome (=PVR) 364–365, who died as consul designate for 377; (2) the poet Ausonius, praetorian prefect (=PPo) 377–379, consul 379 (the

book includes one letter each from Symmachus *père* and Ausonius); (3) Praetextatus, PVR 367–368, PPo 384, who died as consul designate for 385; (4) Petronius Probus, four times PPo between the 360s and 380s, consul 371; (5) Celsinus Titianus, the author's brother, who died in office as *Vicarius Africae*, 380; (6) Hesperius, the son of Ausonius, PPo 377/8–380; (7) Antonius, PPo 376–378, consul 382; (8) Syagrius, PPo 380–381/2, consul 381. They are thus letters of the author's youth (he was born in the first half of the 340s), all written before his urban prefecture, exclusively to family and high office holders. Some letters are literary (1.1–2, an exchange of verse compositions with his father; 1.14, praise of Ausonius' poem on the river Mosel). Others have clear political agendas (1.13, praising the emperor Gratian's first letter to the senate after his father's death to its real author, Ausonius himself; 1.95, thanking Syagrius for the opportunity to read out news of imperial victories in the senate). Mostly, and especially in the second half of the book, he is studiously unrevealing: florid letters of recommendation and those simply keeping a correspondence going. The early date of the letters in Book 1, along with their disproportionately grand recipients, careful arrangement and conspicuous archaisms, led Callu in 1972 to conclude that Book 1 had been published by Symmachus in his lifetime. Two anepigraphic letters in Book 9, probably published long after Symmachus' death, have been identified by S. Roda as addressed to Ausonius and Probus (9.88, included here, and 9.112, regrettably absent); Symmachus would have excluded them from Book 1 as inconsistent with his careful self-fashioning as his correspondents' equal. S. supports and strengthens this consensus, also arguing that the structure of Books 1–7, of which the latter six were published posthumously by Symmachus' son Memmius, was designed by Symmachus himself to reflect Varro's *Hebdomades*.

The translation is generally very reliable and close to the Latin, with a particular sensitivity to the technical language of epistolary friendship (especially words like *religio* and *frater*, which do not have their usual meanings). Some minor corrigenda. At 1.1.3 l. 4, *regum praetoria rexi* is rendered 'I ruled as the emperor's praetorian', which is too obscure even for verse: better to write 'the emperors' [pl.] praetorian prefect'. A line below, *fastūs*, pride, is translated as if it were *fastos*, calendar (actually, a reasonable emendation). At 9.88.3 word order should, I think, make *amice* an adverb. In 1.29 either the variant *vigeret* or Havet's *vegeret* has been translated for the text's *vergeret*. In 1.89.1, *aptata* has rightly been translated, but the text has *aptatam*.

A second impressive characteristic of this book lies in S.'s unfailingly insightful and illuminating portrayal of how these letters can serve as 'windows into the social, political, and cultural landscape of the late fourth century' (p. xvi). She makes real strides in nuancing Symmachus' paganism, so often made the centrepiece of studies, and showing how far aristocratic culture tried to smooth over religious difference; she brings out details like Symmachus' teasing of Praetextatus for preferring holidays to pontifical duties; she succeeds in making the superficially dull quite fascinating.

The book's excellent qualities are marred, though not undermined, by a persistent flaw, that S. is not consistently accurate in dealing with the problems of chronology and prosopography. It must be acknowledged that no Symmachus scholar has ever been immune from error in these knotty and intractable areas; but too many errors have slipped through. For example, she reconstructs the fourth of Probus' four prefectures, in Illyricum, Italy and Africa, as lasting from summer 383 to late 384 (p. 118), without noticing that she has allocated the same office to Praetextatus from May 384 until his death in December 384 (pp. 91–2; the death is 'November or December' on p. xxxv n. 113, but in fact, Cameron's *Last Pagans* now confirms, as already argued by Cecconi, that Praetextatus probably died well before December). Other errors are contradicted by accurate statements of the facts elsewhere (suggesting that good editing should have caught them). For

example, Gratian's accession was 375 not 376 (p. 36; correct elsewhere). Ausonius was quaestor under Valentinian as well as Gratian (p. 36), so from 375 or earlier, but a start date of 376 is given at p. 164 and assumed in the dating of, for example, 1.28 (on a related note, *Ep.* 9.88, from the 360s, cannot possibly refer to his quaestorship, p. 37 n. 11). Symmachus *Or.* 5 was delivered not on 5 January 376 (p. xxx) but 9 January (correct elsewhere, including the footnote on the same page). Symmachus *père* was nominated consul for 377 but died before 1 January (correct on p. 1, *contra* p. 34 n. 1; but the inscription attesting gold statues of him is posthumous, from 377 not 376, p. xix). Symmachus' brother Titianus died not in 381 (p. lii) but 380 (correct on p. xxxi and elsewhere). By S.'s reconstruction Syagrius was consul in 381, but for *Ep.* 1.102 he is suddenly only consul designate in that year (correct for the previous and following letters). The claim that in 394 Symmachus' children 'were married to the Nicomachi Flaviani' (p. xli) is false: his daughter had wed the younger Flavianus but his son, a child in 394, did not marry into the family till 401 (rightly on p. xliv). Further prosopographical errors are more tangential. Olybrius (Probus' father-in-law) is to be distinguished from his grandson of the same name (p. li n. 189). The Valentinus who was the dedicatee of the Codex Calendar of 354 would have been too old to be one of Symmachus' brothers (p. xx n. 39). Further historical confusions involve the sequence of events in the coup that toppled Gratian in 383 (pp. 36, 146) and Jerome's departure from Rome (p. lvii n. 212).

The pity of these and other slips is that S. makes numerous effective prosopographical points, and often improves on Callu in the dating of individual letters. However, perhaps because she has not got as deeply involved in these issues as she should, she has missed some open goals for dating various individual letters more precisely. Given the high quality of the translation, and the compelling picture of Symmachus and his social world, it would be excellent to have a second, improved edition; even without it, this is a valuable work.

University of Edinburgh

GAVIN KELLY  
[gavin.kelly@ed.ac.uk](mailto:gavin.kelly@ed.ac.uk)

## PAPERS ON SIDONIUS APOLLINARIS

VAN WAARDEN (J.A.), KELLY (G.) (edd.) *New Approaches to Sidonius Apollinaris*. With indices on Helga Köhler, C. Sollius Apollinaris Sidonius: Briefe Buch I. (Late Antique History and Religion 7.) Pp. xiv + 397. Leuven, Paris and Walpole, MA: Peeters, 2013. Cased, €89. ISBN: 978-90-429-2928-9.

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This volume is an excellent contribution to the study of Sidonius Apollinaris, for which its editors and all those involved ought to be congratulated. Each contribution provides advice and guidelines for specific aspects of a planned commentary of Sidonius' *œuvre*, in line with the stated ambition of the Saxxi working group (Sidonius Apollinaris in the twenty-first century). The decision to publish this volume and resulting commentaries in English will remove an ongoing impediment to the exchange of ideas within Sidonian scholarship. The book is structured into three main parts: 'Cultural Diversity in Research', 'The *Carmina*: Poetics and Intertextuality' and 'The *Epistulae*: the Collection, Its Aims, and Its Language'. Amherdt, Köhler and Santelia offer summaries of French, German and Italian scholarship respectively. Amherdt's approach is chronological, Köhler's is largely